

THE  
**CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.**

VOL. I.

NOVEMBER, 1824.

No. 11.

ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS.

SERMONS—No. VIII.

THE MUTUAL COMFORT OF CHRISTIANS.

I. THESSALONIANS, v. 11.—*Wherefore, comfort yourselves together.*

The epistle from which these words are chosen, was first addressed "unto the church of the Thessalonians." The apostle repeatedly exhorts the members of that church to promote their own mutual comfort. This duty he enjoins in our text and enforces by several considerations, which are mentioned in the context. It is in view of these considerations, that he says to the members of the church of the Thessalonians, "wherefore, comfort yourselves together." These words imply, that there are proper and sufficient sources of mutual comfort to christians. And they plainly show, that it is the duty of the members of a christian church to promote their mutual comfort. By the words of the text, then, I am lead, in the present discourse,

I. To consider the sources of mutual comfort to christians; and

II. To show that the members

of a christian church ought to promote their mutual comfort. It is proposed,

I. To consider the sources of mutual comfort to christians. True christians are closely united in reality, as well as by profession.—As they share in their common sufferings and sorrows, so they mutually partake of the consolations, which the gospel affords to the children of God. In the holy scriptures, God gives many instructions for the comfort of his people and plainly exhibits the sources, from which their mutual comfort is to be derived. From what is taught in the scriptures on this subject, it may be observed,

1. That christians may be mutually comforted by their appointment unto salvation. This source of comfort the apostle mentions in the context. He says to his christian brethren—"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." The same subject he mentions in the beginning of the epistle. He says, "knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God."

In his second epistle to the same church, he writes, "We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning, chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The divine appointment of christians to eternal salvation is mentioned in the different epistles to the churches, as a source of comfort to believers in Jesus Christ. This subject Christ often mentioned to his disciples for their comfort.—It is to their appointment unto salvation, that we are to ascribe, whatever God has done for the benefit of his people in this life, and for their future glory in heaven. When christians have a sight and sense of their sin and guilt, they feel wholly unworthy of the least favor; and they are sensible that they deserve the wrath of God forever. They are sensible that God would have been righteous and glorious, if they had been appointed unto wrath. They perceive, that it is of the infinite goodness and sovereign mercy of God, that any of mankind are saved from sin, shame and woe.—When christians consider, that God was pleased, for the glory of his name, to choose and appoint, in the counsel of his own will, that they should be saved, their hearts are withdrawn from themselves and from every created object and fixed upon the exceeding riches of his grace in Jesus Christ. In view of the sovereign and bound-

less grace of God, as it appears in the election of his people unto salvation, they rise to the highest and purest source of spiritual consolation. In view of this subject, the apostle writes "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." The doctrine of election, when it is rightly and humbly considered by christians, affords such a bright display of the love, the mercy and the sovereignty of God, as is suited to fill their hearts with comfort amidst all the evils and sorrows they experience on earth. For such persons, as the apostle believed to be chosen and appointed unto salvation, he prays in these words—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God, even our Father, who hath loved us and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts."

2. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ for his people is a source of mutual comfort to christians.—This is also mentioned in the context. The apostle urges his brethren to take "for an helmet the hope of salvation." And

he then adds, "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us." The death of Christ for his people is a permanent foundation of comfort to their hearts. It exhibits an affecting and glorious evidence and expression of the goodness of God. John says to his brethren, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." In view of the death of Christ, christians are consoled, because it so fully displays the justice and the mercy of God, while it opens a way for the forgiveness and salvation of every sinner, who repents and believes the gospel. No holy being could ever consent that one sinner should be saved from the curse of the law, at the expence of the truth and justice of God. Now while sinners are justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus, God is just and his justice appears very glorious in justifying every one, who believes in Jesus. When christians turn their hearts to the cross of Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanses from all sin, though laboring and heavy laden with sin and guilt, with shame and sorrow, with afflictions and temptations, yet there they find rest to their souls. Though they be feeble,

wretched and needy in themselves, yet through faith they can say—"If God be for us, who can be against us? He, that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God, that justifieth. Who is he, that condemneth? It is Christ that died." From the sorrow and death of Christ, christians receive their life and comfort. In view of his death they will forever rejoice and sing—"Unto him, that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." The death of Christ is the life and strength, the hope and joy, the refuge and comfort, the glory and salvation of believers. The apostle says—"God forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, my Lord, by whom I am crucified unto the world and the world unto me."

3. Christians may be mutually comforted by the gracious effects, which the Holy Spirit produces in their hearts. In the context the apostle mentions the knowledge, love, faith and hope of christians. In view of these blessed effects of the Holy Spirit, they are urged to comfort themselves together. Writing to the same persons the apostle says "When I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some



means the tempter have tempted you and our labor be in vain.— But now, when Timotheus came from you unto us and brought us good tidings of your faith and love; and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you; therefore brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.” It is consoling to christians to behold in their brethren the excellent and lovely graces, which are produced by the special influence of the Holy Spirit. By the influence of the Spirit christians are caused to see the glory and beauty of God and of the law, of Jesus Christ and the gospel. As christians are united in their religious sentiments, they have mutual love in the truth.— While they see the image of Jesus Christ in his beloved people, their hearts are comforted in their friendship and society. The psalmist says unto God, “They, that fear thee, will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in thy word.” The beloved disciple says to the well-beloved Gaius— “I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” When Christians walk in the truth and feel and express the love, the faith, the hope and joy, which the Holy Spirit produces in their hearts,

they strengthen and comfort their brethren. How often have the faint and weary hearts of christians, who are ready to say in their haste, “all men are liars,” been revived by seeing in their brethren, the tenderness and beauty of holy affections! They, who love holiness and hate wickedness, are greatly comforted by perceiving in Christians the gracious effects, which the Holy Spirit produces in their hearts.

4. Christians may be mutually comforted in the prospect of their eternal residence with the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven. It is by this consideration, that christians are directly urged in the text, to comfort themselves together. The apostle says, “God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.” He then adds the words of our text—“Wherefore comfort yourselves together; and edify one another, even as also ye do.”— Again he says—“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” By similar considera-



tions, the Saviour comforted his disciples before his death. He said, "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go & prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The prospect of being with Christ and his people in heaven is suited to relieve and comfort the hearts of christians in their darkness and distress in this evil world. Notwithstanding his afflictions, temptations, and conflicts, the psalmist was consoled, when he was able by faith to say unto God, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory." The affliction of christians in this life seems light and but for a moment, in view of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in heaven. They shall be "before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." In prospect of the perfect and eternal blessedness of heaven believers

may well comfort themselves together. Having considered the sources of mutual comfort to christians, it is now proposed,

II. To show that the members of a christian church ought to promote their mutual comfort.

To show that this is their duty, it may be observed.

1. That they are required, in the scriptures, to promote the comfort of their brethren. By Isaiah, God says, "comfort ye, comfort ye my people." To the saints at Corinth, Paul writes, "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted." In the epistle, from which the text is chosen, the members of the church at Thessalonica are repeatedly required to comfort one another by very weighty and affecting considerations. These divine requirements bind christians at the present day, as well as in the days of the apostles. For the members of a church now need to be comforted as well as in former times. And every member needs to be comforted by the attention, the tenderness and kindness of the other members. The members of a church are able to comfort one another. And if they will only consider, that they are required by the Lord their God to comfort themselves together, they will at once perceive that they are bound to promote their mutual comfort by such an obligation as can never be broken.

2. The members of a church

solemnly engage to promote their own mutual comfort. When a church receives any persons into their communion, they bind themselves by their covenant with God to promote the spiritual welfare of every such person, and by their mutual covenant, they bind themselves to a faithful performance of the same duty. When a person joins a church, he engages to seek and to promote the peace and comfort of all its members. The members of a church mutually and solemnly promise and covenant to labor together for the common edification and consolation of all their brethren, with whom they are especially united by a public profession of religion. If then, they do not comfort one another and comfort themselves together, they break their solemn covenant and their endearing engagements.

3. By comforting their brethren the members of a church greatly increase their own spiritual consolation. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." To comfort the afflicted, tempted, and weary people of God, produces a high degree of happiness. For it is the exercise and expression of holy and gracious affections. Every pious member of a church enjoys the peace and comfort of the other members. Christians are so united, "that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice

with it." To the saints at Corinth, the apostle writes, "We were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all." The apostle was also greatly consoled by Philemon, because he comforted the hearts of the saints. He says, "We have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother." Faithful christians are always greatly comforted in the comfort of their brethren. They, who the most desire and labor to promote the comfort of other christians, enjoy the most comfort in their own hearts.

4. By promoting their mutual comfort the members of a church will secure and enjoy the presence and favor of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter. He produces in christians all the light, love, faith, hope, peace, joy and comfort, which they experience. The Holy Spirit delights in the comfort of his people.—And he greatly delights in all, who seek their comfort. Such persons as labor to promote the mutual comfort of christians, please the God of peace and comfort, and enjoy his special presence and favor. Such persons work together with God and perform a service, which is very important and pleasant in his sight. Hence Paul says to the members of the church in Corinth, "Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace;



and the God of love and peace shall be with you."—If, then, the members of a church would enjoy the presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit, they must be attentive and careful to comfort themselves together.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If there be such sources of mutual comfort to christians; and if the members of a church are bound to comfort themselves together; then a faithful church must afford a very pleasant sight.

The conduct of such a church will be pleasant. For all its members will possess and manifest a spirit of mutual love, kindness and sympathy. Every member of a faithful church will be tenderly affected towards all the other members, and will desire and labor to promote their comfort. And the whole church will be tenderly affected towards every member, and desire and labor to promote his comfort in the doctrines, duties and blessings of the gospel. The conduct, then, of a faithful church will be very beautiful, lovely, and pleasant. And equally beautiful, lovely and pleasant will be the condition of a faithful church.—For their condition will agree with their conduct. A faithful church will be in a united, orderly, peaceful and happy condition.—The members of such a church will comfort themselves together in the eternal purpose of God respecting the redemption of his people. They will also derive comfort from the atoning sufferings of

the Lord Jesus Christ for their redemption. Feeling in their own hearts and seeing in their brethren the blessed fruits of the Holy Spirit, they will be comforted in the truth and by the grace of God.—And the earnest and prospect of their future and eternal commun-

ion and glory in heaven will fill their hearts with joy and peace. It must be a pleasant sight, indeed, to behold the lovely conduct and the happy condition of a faithful church.

2. If the members of a church are bound to promote their mutual comfort, then it is a great thing to be a member of a church. The members of a church are joined to a very important body. No other society, or communion, that ever exists on earth, is really so important as the society and communion of christian churches.—The members of such churches are united by the authority and influence of the adorable Trinity. And they are united for the most important purposes, that can be promoted on earth. To be a member of a church is not a matter of mere form, or name. It is to take a most important station. Every member of a church owes a great service to all the other members. He is bound to be attentive, watchful and faithful to promote their spiritual comfort. It is then a great thing to be a member of a church on account of the important services, which every member owes to the other members. It is also a great thing, on account



of the important privileges, to which a member of a church is entitled. For he is entitled to the services and consolations, that arise from the friendship and communion of christian brethren. To be a member of a church, then, is not a matter of mere profession and appearance. But it is, indeed, a very great concern.

3. If the members of a church are bound to promote their mutual comfort, then every true christian, who is a member of a church, will by his conduct, afford evidence of his sincerity. A true christian will not be indolent and careless, when he has made a profession of religion. He will be mindful of his covenant with God and with his christian brethren. And it will be his great concern to perform his vows and to discharge his duty.— Such a person, by his conduct, will show that he has not merely a name to live, while he is dead. He will not keep at a distance from the members of the body, to which he belongs. But he will consider and realize, that he and they are one in Christ Jesus.— He will tenderly feel the interests of his brethren. And he will labor to promote their spiritual consolation. By such faithful conduct he will show, that he is a living and active member of the Savior's spiritual body. By such conduct he will maintain and discover evidence of his sincerity in making a profession of religion.

4. If the members of a church are bound to promote their mutu-

al comfort, then every consistent christian will desire to be a member of a church. He will desire to be a member from his regard to the church, and from a regard to his own spiritual interests.— His regard to the church will lead a real christian to desire to be admitted to its fellowship. By joining a church a christian can do much more to promote the comfort of other christians, than he can do while he is not a member of a church. Besides a christian, by joining a church, takes the right method to promote his own comfort in the services and privileges of christian communion. Every true christian, then, will be prompted by his own heart to become a member of a christian church by a public profession of religion.

5. In view of what has been said on this subject, it is evident that christians will always be comforted, when they turn to the proper sources of comfort. The proper sources of comfort to christians are pure, perfect and permanent. The living and true God, as he appears in the gospel of his grace and in the redemption of his people, is the comfort of christians. When they turn to him, they turn to the fountain of consolation and happiness. If they turn from God to earthly vanities, or to any created beings; or if they rely on themselves, or on means, they will experience disappointment and vexation. But when they truly turn to God, they

will find in him abundant and everlasting consolation.

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REMARKS ON THE HISTORY OF NAAMAN.

The history of Naaman the Syrian is deeply interesting and instructive. An attentive perusal of it naturally suggests to the contemplative mind reflections, on the wisdom of God, and on the character of man, of a highly practical nature. With the outlines of his history, as recorded in the second book of Kings the reader is supposed to be so familiarly acquainted, as to render a particular statement of them in the introduction, unnecessary.

But, what are some of the most important remarks, which the history of Naaman suggests?

1. By his history we are naturally reminded of the sinful character, and the ruined state, of mankind by nature. "Naaman was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the Lord hath given deliverance unto Syria:—he was also a mighty man in valour; *but he was a leper.*" Notwithstanding all his power and honor, and riches, and consequent greatness, he was a leper;—was afflicted with a loathsome, painful disorder; which, had he lived in Israel, would have excluded him from all society; which must have rendered him a burden to himself, and, when fully seated, was incurable by human skill. Naaman was almost as great, as the world

could make him. And yet, we may suppose, that with him the basest of his slaves would not have exchanged conditions. From a consideration of his condition, how natural does the mind recur to the sinful character, and the ruined state, of mankind by nature. No natural object can more strikingly represent the sinful character of all mankind by nature, than a person, who, like Naaman, is deeply affected with the disease of leprosy. In a spiritual sense, the world is full of lepers. The leprosy of sin lies deep within every human heart. Like a subtle virulent poison, it has diffused itself into the most secret recesses of the soul, and has taken entire possession of the whole moral man. In consequence of its poisonous character, there is, by nature, no moral health in him. It excludes the love of God from his heart, and often causes a most furious commotion among the passions of his soul. From his youth up, till he is renewed by the Spirit, it causes "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart to be evil, and only evil continually." It not only reigns supreme in his moral affections, but brings him under the condemning sentence of the violated law—exposes, and justly exposes, him to feel the weight of the wrath of God forever. Such is the leprosy of sin in its genuine nature and tendency. It is its genuine nature and tendency to blight all, that is fair and lovely in creation. It aims directly at



the throne of the Eternal; and would not, if unrestrained, stop its mad career, till it should overturn the moral kingdom of Jehovah, and could brood, with malignant pleasure, over the ruins of a desolated universe.

2. By the history of Naaman we are naturally reminded, that divine wisdom alone is adequate to point out to mankind a method of deliverance from their sinful, ruined state.

Previous to his going to Elisha to be cured of his leprosy, Naaman had unquestionably tried the utmost, that physicians could do for him, but all in vain; and for the reason, that such was his disorder, when thoroughly infused into the system, it bid defiance to human skill. A little Jewish damsel directed him to go to Elisha, and Elisha directed him to go and wash seven times in Jordan, and be clean. There was nothing in the method, that Elisha prescribed, which, in itself, was suited to cure the leprosy. If, at any time *previous* to his going to the prophet, Naaman had dipped himself in Jordan till seventy times seven, there is no reason to suppose, he would thereby have been cured of his leprosy. We must, therefore, conclude, that the method of cure prescribed to him was specially selected by infinite wisdom, for a special occasion, and a special purpose. By the method prescribed, God undoubtedly intended to convince Naaman, that there was, indeed, a God in Israel,

who alone could prescribe to him a method of deliverance from the loathsome disorder, with which he was afflicted. As it was with Naaman in a *natural* respect, so, we have seen, it is with all mankind in a *moral* respect. They are all, by nature, thoroughly infected by the leprosy of sin. As nothing less than divine wisdom could prescribe to Naaman a cure for his painful disorder, so nothing less than infinite wisdom is adequate to point out to mankind a method of deliverance from their sinful state. Mankind have, indeed, in all ages, been attempting to ascertain some method of deliverance from apprehended future evil. Hence, all the superstition, and idolatry, and bloody rites and ceremonies of the heathen world. By these they have attempted to appease the anger of the gods, and to secure personal exemption from expected evil. The most learned heathen philosophers formed various conjectures respecting a future state of existence—respecting the condition of men in that future state—and respecting the method, by which the favour of God might be secured; sometimes fixing on one method, then abandoning it for another, and for others still, in almost endless succession. Respecting all the methods, which human wisdom has devised, for the deliverance of mankind from their fallen state, it may be truly said, that they are absurd, contradictory, and unsatisfactory in the ex-



tre. The truth is, the highest wisdom of men is foolishness with God; and the world, by wisdom, knows not God. *How may sinful man be just with God?* is, therefore a question, which infinite wisdom alone can answer. This question infinite wisdom has *satisfactorily* answered. Through the medium of his holy word, God has informed us, that *he* has found a ransom—that he has laid help on one, who is mighty to save—that he can now be just, and yet the justifier of all penitent believers in Jesus, who, by his sufferings and death has made an atonement sufficient for all mankind. Such is the method of deliverance from their sinful state, which infinite wisdom has prescribed to mankind; and which nothing less than divine wisdom could have devised. It directs the despairing, dying sinner to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. It assures him, that a fountain has been filled with blood, and directs him to wash in that fountain, and be healed. As the dying Israelite looked up to the brazen serpent, and was healed of his poisonous wound, the method of salvation devised by infinite wisdom, and into which angels desire to look, directs the sinner, divested of his self-righteousness, to look up to the cross, repent, believe, be forgiven and be happy forever.

3. By the history of Naaman, we are naturally reminded, that, with the method of deliverance from their sinful state, which in-

finite wisdom has devised, mankind are naturally displeased. With the simple direction of Elisha—"Go, and wash in Jordan seven times"—Naaman was highly displeased. "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus?" he exclaimed, "better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? Behold I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand on the place, and recover the leper. So he turned and went away in a rage." He desired to be cured as a person of consequence. The method prescribed by the prophet he regarded as too common, too plain, and too cheap for so great a man as he to be cured by—did not believe, that it would effect a cure—or, if it would, that he might as well be plunged in the rivers of Damascus, as in the waters of Israel. "So he turned and went away in a rage." His conduct is a striking exemplification of the conduct of sinners, when urged to avail themselves of the method of deliverance from their sinful state, which is prescribed by the gospel. This method strikes at the root of all their depravity, pride, and boasted self-righteousness. It requires them, stripped of all their self-righteousness, and relying solely on divine grace, to come as poor beggars—to plead for mercy solely on account of what their Lord and Saviour has done and suffered,

and believingly to accept offered mercy through him. Against this method of salvation their hearts rebel. When it is clearly described to them, they are often greatly offended. Inform them plainly, that they cannot be justified by the deeds of the law; that they cannot be saved, on account of any thing, they have done, or can do, as the ground of their forgiveness, and they are often disposed to turn and go away in a rage. They desire to be saved in such a manner, that they may, in the end, be able to ascribe the glory of their salvation to themselves. They cannot endure the thought of casting all their boasted talents and learning perhaps, and all their fancied personal worthiness, at the foot of the cross, and of relying exclusively upon what another has done and suffered for deliverance from condemnation.

All this our Saviour plainly discovered, when he was with sinners upon earth. Hence he said to them explicitly—"Ye *will not come* unto me, that ye might have life." For the same reason, when, at the present day, they are urged and entreated to avail themselves of the provisions of the gospel, their hearts often rise in opposition to its holy, humbling demands, and in their thoughts at least, "they all, with one consent, begin to make excuse." The language of their hearts is—"Is not the way, we have prescribed for ourselves, better, than the one you have described? May we not pur-

sue our own chosen way, and be saved? "So, they turn, and go away in a rage." But,

4. By the history of Naaman, we are reminded, that the directions of the gospel must be strictly followed. Naaman, it seems, was favored with prudent, faithful, affectionate servants. After he had turned from Elisha, and gone away in a rage, they "came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? how much rather, then, when he saith unto thee, Wash and be clean. Then he went down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child and he was clean."

Had Naaman persisted in refusing to comply with the directions of the prophet, there is no reason to believe, his leprosy would ever have been cleansed. This fact forcibly reminds us, that, if sinners would be cleansed of the leprosy of sin, which has diffused itself throughout their moral system; if they would be delivered from their state of condemnation, they must strictly comply with the directions of that method of salvation, which divine wisdom has devised. Divesting themselves of all dependence upon self-righteousness, and becoming sensible, that, in a moral respect, they are miserable, and wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked, they must exercise

unfeigned sorrow for their sins, and penitently and believingly cast themselves upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.— Let them do this; forgiveness—salvation—eternal blessedness, will be theirs. Let them continue to refuse till death, to comply with the requisitions of the gospel; under the dominion of sinful affection and the condemnation of the violated law they will forever irrecoverably remain. F.

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THE INSTRUCTION PARENTS SHOULD  
GIVE THEIR CHILDREN.

The religious instruction, which parents ought to give their children, is more extensive than is generally supposed. The bare speaking about religion, now and then, is not giving children that religious instruction, which God has enjoined upon parents. To remind and instruct are two things. To instruct upon any subject, is to exhibit some light upon it.— Parents ought to exhibit religious truth to the minds of their children, in order to instruct them in the knowledge of religion. The instruction, which they ought to give their children, consists of two branches.

In the first place, they ought to instruct them in the doctrines of religion. All religion is founded in truth. And the fundamental truths of religion ought to be clearly laid open to the minds of children, as soon as they are ca-

pable of understanding them— And this is very early. The first principles of religion are very easy to be understood by those, who have imbibed no prejudices against them. What is more easy to be understood than that there is a God, who made all things, who upholds all things, who governs all things, who loves the good and hates the bad, who will reward the righteous and punish the wicked? Children can very easily understand and realize the idea of their creator, their preserver, their benefactor, and their supreme and final judge. Let parents only turn the attention of their children to the sun, moon and stars, and the great objects of creation; and they will soon impress on their minds the belief of a holy, an all-seeing and heart-searching God, who will make them happy or miserable forever, according to their conduct in this life. And this impression, once made upon their minds, will continually strengthen as their capacities enlarge, and their knowledge increases. Every year, and, indeed, every day will tend to exhibit clearer and clearer evidence, that they are the creatures of God, in whom they live and move and have their being. When parents have taught their children that there is a God, to whom they are accountable for all their actions, it will be easy to make them believe that the Bible is his holy word, which they are under sacred obligations to read and



obey. This is a most important article of parental instruction. It is not to be expected, that children will reverence the Bible, before they are really convinced that it came from God, and is clothed with divine authority.—No other people in the world ever treated the Bible with so much veneration and solemnity as the Jews. They never took up, nor laid down the law, without manifesting peculiar respect and awe to the lawgiver. Children ought to be taught to treat the Bible as the word of God; and never read it nor speak of it, as a common book. Nor is it difficult to make children revere and treat the Bible as the word of God. Precept and example will soon impress this truth upon their minds; so that they will not dare to trifle with the word of life, nor treat the scriptures of truth with levity or contempt. And when parents have gained these two points, to make their children believe, that there is a great and glorious God, and that the Bible is his holy word, they may then easily teach them the most essential and important doctrines of divine revelation. These are level to the lowest capacity. A child may understand the doctrine of the divine purposes; that God formed all his designs before he made the world; that he governs the world just as he always intended to govern it; that he determined to save sinners by the death of Christ; that all men are sinners and need salvation; that they cannot be saved without becoming penitent and holy; that they are dependant upon God to make them holy and happy; that all, who are penitent and holy, will go to heaven; and all, that are finally impenitent and unholy, will go to hell. These great and essential truths are to be taught and explained to children, before any false and erroneous sentiments have crept into their minds. It is just as necessary thus to indoctrinate children, to make them religious, as to indoctrinate a Jew or a heathen, to make them embrace the gospel. There is no more reason to expect that God will renew the hearts of children, who are to grow up, before they are in some measure acquainted with divine truth, than that he will convert a Jew or pagan, without any knowledge of the gospel. True religion is the same thing in children as in the adult. It consists in love to divine truth. Hence the first branch of religious instruction to be given to children, respects the doctrines of the Bible. The same words, which God taught parents among his ancient people, they were to teach their children. “And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.” Parents are to begin to teach the doctrines of religion, as soon as they are capable

of understanding them, and to continue to instruct them as long as they remain children, or until they arrive to manhood and cease to be under their care. They are to teach the same doctrines to their children, which God has taught them and commanded them to believe, to love, and to teach. This leads me to observe, in the next place, that parents ought to teach their children the duties as well as the doctrines of religion. Children cannot understand the duties, which they ought to perform, until they understand the doctrines upon which these duties are founded. But as soon as they understand the doctrines of religion, then they are capable of feeling their moral obligations to perform the duties, which result from them. When children are made to believe there is a God, and that they are his sinful, guilty, perishing creatures, whom he has sent his Son to save; then they are prepared to receive instruction respecting the duty, which they owe to God, to their parents and to their fellow-men. Parents ought, first of all, to teach their children the duties, which they owe to God. These are summarily contained in the first and great command in the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." As soon as children are taught to know, that God is, and that he is a most great, and glorious, and amiable being, they may be made to feel,

that they ought to love him sincerely and supremely. And being convinced of this, they can readily feel their obligation to pray to their Father, who is in heaven, to repent of their sins against him and to trust in his mercy for forgiveness and salvation. It is easy to make children know how they ought to feel and conduct towards God. And it is a sense of their obligations to him, that lays the broadest foundation for feeling their other obligations. In view of the character and authority of God, it is easy for parents to make their children feel, that they ought to love, revere and obey them. It is sufficient to tell them, that God has commanded them to "honor their father and mother." This will strike them with awe, when they know and acknowledge, that God is their creator and judge, who will call them to an account for all their conduct. It is of great importance that parents should instruct their children into the knowledge of their duty towards them. They should make them feel, that it is God, who commands their obedience to their parents. Children, as well as men, are extremely prone to disregard all human authority. And when they imagine, that they are bound by no other authority than that of their parents, they will, if possible, trample upon it. Hence it becomes parents, when they exercise authority over their children, especially when they enforce it by

correction, to show them, that God has expressly commanded them to exercise and enforce authority over them and commanded them to obey and submit.— There is no other means, that will so powerfully establish parental authority in the minds of children. No child can stand before it. Let the parent convince the child, that God commands him to treat him as he does and the child will feel irresistible conviction, that he ought to obey parental authority and submit to it. It is an important part of parental instruction to teach children the nature and obligation of parental authority.— And when children are taught to treat their heavenly Father and their earthly parents as they ought to do, they may be easily taught how to treat all their fellow men. For God has revealed his will respecting their conduct towards all their superiors, inferiors and equals. And the same spirit of love to God and love to their parents and of duty to both, will lead them to respect all their fellow men and treat them as becomes the gospel. The child, that is taught to fear God and obey his parents, will naturally feel his obligation to respect all persons and regard the good of all with whom he is connected or conversant.

Thus parents ought to teach their children all that God has taught them. They ought to inculcate the same doctrines and the same duties of religion upon their children, which God has enjoined

upon themselves. This is properly *religious instruction* and essentially different from teaching the rules of decency, propriety, or what is called good manners.— Parents should teach their children to do every thing heartily as unto the Lord and not unto men; or to act upon religious principles and not upon the maxims and customs of the world. They should train them up in the way, in which they should go and from which they should not depart, in order to glorify God and enjoy him for ever. They should teach them to live a holy, devout and heavenly life, which will prepare them for a peaceful death and for a blessed and glorious immortality.

RESH.

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SINNERS MAY BE SAVED IF THEY WILL.

Notwithstanding all that has been done for sinful and ruined men, it seems to be the opinion of many that obstacles still lie in their path to life and glory, which they are utterly unable to surmount. A brief attempt will be made to show the incorrectness of this opinion, which is so dangerous to immortal souls.

The salvation of the gospel includes deliverance from sin itself, and from the endless torments of hell, the just wages of sin, recovery to holiness, and ~~the~~ enjoyment of everlasting happiness in heaven. That sinners may obtain this holy and gracious salva-



tion if they will, the subsequent remarks, it is believed, will evince.

An ample atonement has been made for sinners. They could not be pardoned, and hence could not be saved without an atonement which should fully express God's abhorrence of sin, vindicate the honor of his violated law, and maintain the rights of his government. Such an atonement was necessary on God's account, i. e. was necessary, that he might extend pardoning mercy to the guilty, consistently with his moral rectitude, with his pure and holy character, with his all perfect reign. And such an atonement has been made by the Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to scripture, is both God and man, or in whose person both divinity and humanity are mysteriously united. This wonderful Being has shed his blood upon the cross, without the shedding of which there could be no remission of sins. The scriptures teach that he was set forth by his Father to be a propitiation, to declare God's righteousness, that he might be just in justifying or pardoning such as believe.—The atonement which Christ has made by his death, is universal ; for it is said expressly, that he died for all, tasted death for every man, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. The atonement being made by such a personage as Jesus Christ, is ample, is all-sufficient. It fully declares or displays God's righteousness and justice in the pardon

of sin. The way, then, is completely opened for sinners to come and be saved if they will.

This appears also from the universality and freeness of the gospel offer. All sinners without exception, to whom the gospel is sent, are in it invited to come and be saved. The invitations are alike addressed to the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the bond and the free. To them all Christ says, "Come ; for all things are now ready. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Salvation is not only offered to all who live under the sound of the gospel, but is offered to all gratuitously. This is the language in which it is offered ; "Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money ; come ye buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. The Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

That sinners may be saved if they will, is also evident from the consideration, that God is perfectly willing to bestow salvation upon all who will come to him in the appointed way for the offered blessing. This is a plain conclusion from the preceding remarks.—For surely, he would not invite sinners to come and be saved, if he were unwilling to receive such

as come, or to grant them pardoning and saving mercy. God is sincere in all his offers and invitations to sinners. How solemn, and impressive, and convincing is this declaration of the Most High! "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" How often does God urge and entreat sinners to come and be saved! How many solemn promises does he make to save all who do come in the way prescribed! And Christ expressly declares, that he who cometh to him shall in no wise be cast out, and that every one who asketh receiveth. What then is there to prevent sinners from being saved if they will? They do indeed sometimes say that God is unwilling to save them. But in saying this, they virtually charge him with insincerity and duplicity. God not only expresses in words his perfect willingness to save all who look to him for salvation, but proves that his words are true, proves that he means as he says, by all the great things he has done for sinners, and by all his conduct towards them from the fall to the present hour.

In proof of the point under consideration, I add, that sinners are able to do all that is required of them, in order to be saved. They cannot, indeed, obtain salvation, unless they do comply with the terms on which it is offered. They

must love God supremely. They must repent of sin. They must believe in Christ. They must deny themselves. And they must persevere in holiness to the end of life. These things they must do, or they cannot be saved. But these things they are not unable to do. What can be easier than to love a being of boundless excellence and glory? What can be easier than to hate and renounce sin, the most evil, hateful, destructive thing in the universe? What path can be found so smooth, and pleasant, and easy to pursue, as the path of wisdom, the path of holiness? That sinners have power to do what is required, and what is so easy, God himself has decided, where he commands them to love him with all their strength, and promises life to those who do this. If God required sinners to love him with more strength than they have, in order to their being saved, then they could not be saved; for it is impossible in the nature of things, either for sinners, or saints, or angels, ever to love him with *more* than all their strength. But the fact that God bids sinners love him with all their strength, proves to a demonstration that they have strength to love him; for surely he would not speak of their having strength or power, if they had none. And the fact that God neither requires sinners to love him nor to do any thing else beyond their strength or power, in order to be saved, proves with equal clearness that they are not



unable to obtain salvation. However unwilling they may be to comply with the terms of salvation, it is certain that a compliance with these terms does not transcend their natural ability or power, be that power more or less. There is, therefore, nothing aside from their own wills, aside from their own free voluntary exercises, that ever does or ever can prevent their being saved. It appears, then, from the extent and magnitude of the atonement, from the universality and freeness of the gospel offers and invitations, from the willingness of God and Christ to save those who do come, and from the fact that sinners are able to comply with the terms on which salvation is offered to them, it appears from these considerations, that they may be saved if they will. And it is true with application to them all, that if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted, according to that they have, and not according to that they have not.

May sinners, then, be saved if they will? Hence we see how groundless are all their excuses and pleas for not complying with the terms on which salvation is tendered to them. Where the gospel is faithfully preached, sinners, when urged to repent, believe and be saved, plead the decrees of God, the election of God, and the sovereignty of God, as so many bars in their way. And they plead their entire dependance on God for a new heart, and that

repentance, faith and salvation are the gifts of God; and hence that they are utterly unable to obtain them. All these and similar excuses sinners often urge, to justify themselves for continuing in sin, to pacify their consciences, and to cast the blame, if possible, off from themselves, and fix it upon God. But though the doctrines that have been named are all true, yet all the excuses which sinners draw from those precious, glorious truths, are entirely groundless; for it has been proved, I trust, that there is nothing out of themselves, nothing aside from their own choice, to prevent their repentance and salvation. That all the pleas they ever urge on this subject, are vain, will be seen at once; if we only consider the case of such as are convinced. If sinners in this world ever know and feel the truth respecting God and themselves, it is when they are thoroughly convinced; for what is conviction, but strong and vivid impressions of divine truth on the mind? I ask the reader, then, whether you ever saw any sinners, who, when under deep conviction, were able to make any of those excuses which are so often made by the stupid, or by the merely thoughtful and awakened? And I am sure you will answer, no. The truth is, that sinners under pungent conviction, do see the fallacy of all the pleas that either they or others ever made for continuing impenitent. They know that such pleas are refuges of lies, and that



the making of them is only adding sin to sin. And they know, too, that nothing in the universe prevents their salvation, but what lies in their own sinful, rebellious stubborn hearts, which are strongly opposed to God and Christ, and that their opposition is chosen, is voluntary. Hence their mouths are shut. The light of truth shines, with such brightness, into their understandings and consciences, that they are compelled to give up all their former pleas, and to mention them no more.—Sinners hate the nature of Christ's holy and self-denying religion.—They hate the nature of his pure, and spiritual, and gracious salvation. The way of sin in which they walk, is the way of their choice, and they love the road to death. They are impenitent, because they love to be impenitent. They live in unbelief and disobedience, because they love to live in them. And they are at enmity with God, and Christ, and truth, and holiness, because they love to be at enmity with them. The only reason then, that any sinners are not saved, is, they are unwilling to be saved on gospel terms. This voluntary opposition and enmity of their hearts, and nothing else, prevents their becoming the friends of God, the followers of his Son, the heirs of his salvation.

May sinners be saved if they will? Then, they who are finally lost will have no reason to complain of the divine conduct towards them. If salvation is free-

ly offered to them, and they are able to obtain it, but miss of it through their own voluntary rejection of it, what ground can they have for complaint? They will have, they can have, none. On the contrary, the lost will forever have great reason to bless God for giving his son to die for them, for all his gracious offers which were made to them, and for all his countless mercies which were bestowed upon them during their state of trial. And I add, they will be forever bound to love and praise him in view of all the bright displays of his justice in their destruction. Though their hearts will be full of complaints and of enmity against him, yet their reason and conscience will be on his side, and will approve of his conduct towards them to all eternity. And when they sink into the pit of endless despair, they will be compelled to own that they sink there justly. Even the saints, the heirs of salvation, feel assured that were they themselves doomed to suffer endless punishment, no injustice would be done to them; for they know that they deserve the awful destruction from which they are delivered. It is not because saints are by nature any less sinful, or less rebellious, or less obstinate than others, that they in distinction from others are saved; but it is because God, agreeably to his eternal purpose, has made them willing in the day of his power to comply with the easy, condescending and gracious,

but self-denying terms of the gospel; and causes them to love him, to submit to his holy will, and to rejoice in his glorious reign. And it depends solely on his sovereign pleasure who and how many of our fallen race shall become truly reconciled to him and be saved.— This, however, is certain, that he hath chosen as many to salvation, as it will be for his glory and the good of the universe to save; and that as many as he has ordained to eternal life, notwithstanding their native unwillingness, will repent, believe and live, to the praise of the glory of his free, sovereign, discriminating grace. Sinners however, are prone to imagine that they are already willing enough to be saved. But were they sensible that the salvation of the gospel is a holy salvation, and that to seek it is to seek deliverance from sin, and to hunger and thirst after righteousness, they would perceive at once their mistake; for they know that they do love sin and hate holiness. No sinner is ever truly willing to be saved, until he is “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Still there is great propriety in calling upon sinners to seek salvation, since they may have it if they will. Were they unable to obtain the blessing, it would be unreasonable and cruel to bid them seek it. Yet as they are not unable, but only unwilling to become sharers in the salvation of God, it is highly proper to bid them come

and receive it at his hand. God commands and even entreats them to do it. Christ commands and entreats them, and orders his ministers to persuade and beseech them to do it. And unless they do give up their voluntary, unreasonable, criminal opposition to him, and come with the gospel temper, and take the water of life freely, they must be shut out of heaven forever, they must be deprived of all its pure and imperishable joys, and be punished with everlasting destruction from his presence, and from the glory of his power. THEOPHILUS.

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SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

No. IV.

*Mission at the Islands in the South Seas.*

The London Missionary Society was formed in 1795. A mission to the islands of the South Seas was the first object that claimed their attention, and engaged their efforts. On the 28th of July, 1796, thirty Missionaries were designated to the important work of planting the gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of those remote seas. They embarked on the 10th of August and arrived at Otaheite, after a pleasant and prosperous voyage, on the 6th of March, 1797. The original objects of the voyage were to establish Christian Missions in Otaheite, the Friendly Islands, the Marquesas, the Sandwich and the Pelew Islands. The

two latter islands were relinquished and the missionaries were stationed *eighteen* at Otaheite, *ten* on one of the Friendly Islands, and one, on one of the Marquesas. The two latter stations, owing to the intestine commotions of the islands and the ferocity of some of their inhabitants, were terminated within two years. But the station at Otaheite has been attended with more auspicious results. With some interruptions from the frequent insurrections of the islanders, the missionaries pursued their labours. They travelled around the island, and preached to thousands of the natives; some of whom gave them an attentive hearing, but the greater part treated their message with levity and disregard. Pomare, the king was their steady friend and protector. They continued to labour with unwearied assiduity for several years, without any apparent success, or encouragement, except what arose from the hope that a silent influence was operating, which would, at length, become apparent by its eternal effects. But they continued under every discouragement to preach the gospel in different parts of the island. After seven years' labour one of the missionaries writes to the directors as follows; "Instructions continue to be given to the inhabitants of Otaheite in the things of God, but apparently none are savingly profited by them; they seem to remain gross idolaters, enemies to God by wicked works, without

God, without hope; yet it must be confessed that very many of them have obtained a considerable, though as yet unsanctified knowledge of the doctrines of christianity." Upon which the directors of that period thus remarked. "We cannot but hope that where a number of poor heathens born and educated in total ignorance of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, obtain a considerable knowledge of the doctrines of christianity, the seed of life may be considered as already sown, and a just expectation indulged that the harvest will one day bless the eyes of the labourers and of the Society." How just were these anticipations will be seen from the result. Soon after, a civil war broke out between King Pomare and a party of his subjects, who wished to deprive him of his authority, in consequence of which, the missionaries were driven from the island. The rebels burnt the houses of the missionaries, destroyed their gardens, and seized all the society's property which could not be hastily removed by the missionaries. In consequence of these calamitous events, and the gloomy prospects before them, the missionaries (excepting two) concluded to sail for Port Jackson. They had not remained there long before they ardently desired to resume their labour in the South Sea Islands. In the mean time Pomare wrote to them expressing his deepest sorrow at their absence, and affectionately



entreating them to come back. The missionaries being also informed that peace was established and Pomare's authority restored, five of them returned and resumed their labours. The king continued to manifest his friendship for them until July 1812, when he declared to them his full conviction of the truths of the gospel, and his determination to worship Jehovah as the only living and true God. He had before cast away his idols, he now became a practical believer. "He regularly observed the Sabbath, entertained clear and consistent views of the doctrines of the gospel, expressed the deepest contrition for his past wickedness, and laboured to persuade his relatives to embrace christianity. This was very encouraging to the missionaries. During the two next years, the fruits of the divine blessing on the labours of the missionaries became more and more conspicuous, so that in their report of 1814, they say that *fifty* had renounced their idols and become the worshipers of Jehovah. This was on Eimeo. About the same time there seemed to be a spirit of inquiry on Otaheite and some there renounced their idolatry. On both these and on some of the neighbouring islands, the congregations increased and the number of those who renounced heathenism, and became the professed worshipers of the true God, multiplied continually. The priest in the district where the missionaries re-

sided renounced idolatry and publicly committed his god to the flames. His example was soon followed in both of the Islands, and not only were idols cast into the fire, but their places of idolatrous worship and altars were destroyed, and "even the wood, of which they were composed, used to dress common food, of which different classes and both sexes partook indiscriminately at a common meal, in utter disregard of prohibitions and customs, rendered powerful by the united influence of superstition and antiquity." The mission continued to flourish greatly.—Without spending time to mention in detail the many occurrences and events which were favorable to the progress of the work, we hasten to the joyful result of the indefatigable labors of these persevering missionaries.

In the course of the next year, just nineteen years from the time the missionaries sailed from England, idolatry was entirely abolished both in Otaheite and Eimeo, and these, together with some smaller Islands, became by the blessing of God, altogether *Christian Islands*. Their idols were destroyed, human sacrifices and infant murders abolished, and the people were every where earnestly calling upon the missionaries to come and instruct them in the knowledge of the christian religion. Places for the public worship of the true God had been erected and were erecting in every district, and where there

were no missionaries to conduct public worship, the natives had prayer meetings among themselves.

Although this change was at last sudden, operating through the whole of these Islands nearly at the same time, yet it was not an inconsiderate change. To use the language of the directors of the society, "The harvest which at length has proved so rapid and complete, sprang from seed that had long been diligently, patiently, copiously, and generally sown among them. The Otaheiteans for twelve years had opportunity of closely observing the nature of practical christianity as exemplified by the missionaries, and during most of that time, its doctrines had been explained, and urged upon their attention, in every district of the Island. In declaring themselves christians therefore, they well know what they profess to believe, and what kind of conduct they bind themselves to observe." From the effects produced upon the natives we have every reason to suppose the change a real one which will be permanently salutary. With their idolatry the people have renounced their former system of thinking and acting—an evident reformation of manners has taken place, their vain and indecent amusements are almost entirely laid aside, and a degree of domestic and social intercourse is enjoyed to which formerly they were entire strangers. A desire for knowledge is universally plant-

ed among the natives, and at least three thousand of them are supplied with books. The way is opened for civilization, to the introduction of the useful arts and to the cultivation of the earth. How great the success, and how incalculable the benefits of this mission. "On several occasions the mission seemed on the verge of ruin—the lights which had long shone dimly, repeatedly appeared to be nearly extinct—but, under the good providence of the Almighty and his gracious influence, it has at length burst out into a far brighter day, than the missionaries ever anticipated." Their benevolent and persevering efforts have been at last rewarded by the conversion of a whole people, from a religion of the most barbarous and dreadful description, polluted by frequent human sacrifices, to an adoption of the mild precepts of christianity. And the consequent change in their social and moral character is most extraordinary.

This change is described by Messrs. Tyerman and Bennet in a letter to the American Board, dated August 9th, 1822. These gentlemen visited the islands as the representatives of the London Missionary Society. Under every advantage arising from a particular view of the islands and a personal intercourse with their inhabitants they write, under the above date, the following paragraph with which we shall close this number.

"Having spent some time in the South Sea Islands, it may not be unacceptable to you to receive our views of the state of religion in those highly favored regions.— You have, no doubt, read the reports which have been made respecting the state of that mission; —and be assured, that so far from those reports being exaggerated, much more might have been said. The work is indeed marvellous in our eyes, and excites in our hearts the most lively gratitude to that God whose hand has been so signally displayed in it. The inhabitants of those Islands were sunk into the lowest possible state of moral degradation; but are now we hesitate not to say, viewing them as a body the most universally and consistently christian of any people upon the face of the earth. The sabbath is universally regarded. The individual is scarcely known who does not attend public worship three times on the Sabbath day and several times in the week. The congregations are large and as well behaved as any congregation we ever saw in England. Numerous churches are formed of pious persons; while multitudes are waiting for admission. Full three fourths of the people can read, and many write and cypher. Industry is every where apparent and civilization has already made considerable progress. Towns are rising up composed of houses built according to the European style. Our furniture is imitated, and the people aim at the same modes of living and clothing. Crimes are very few. Peace and happiness are every where apparent. The marriage vow is held sacred. Infanticide is wholly discontinued. Religion is the great business of life, while secular affairs though not neglected are held as only secondary.— All the food wanted for the Sabbath is dressed on Saturday: not a fire is lighted, nor a canoe is seen moving on the water, nor are any visits paid on the Lord's day. Never did the gospel obtain a more complete and glorious triumph over ignorance, and sensuality, and superstition, since the world began." W.

## EXTRACTS.

### DEATH OF VOLTAIRE.

It was during Voltaire's last visit to Paris, when his triumph was complete, and he had even feared that he should die with glory, amidst the acclamations of an infat-

uated theatre, that he was struck with the hand of Providence, and fated to make a very different termination of his career.

In the midst of his triumphs, a violent hemorrhage raised appre-



hensions for his life. D. Alembert, Diderot, and Marmontel, hastened to support his resolution in his last moments, but were only witnesses to their mutual ignominy as well as to his own.

Here let not the Historian fear exaggeration, rage, remorse, reproach, and blasphemy, all accompany, and characterize the long agony of the dying Atheist.

His death, the most terrible that is ever recorded to have stricken the impious man, will not be denied by his companions in impiety. Their silence, however much they may wish to deny it, is the least of those corroborative proofs which could be adduced. Not one of the sophisters has ever dared to mention any sign given of resolution or tranquility by the premier chief, during the space of three months which elapsed from the time he was crowned in the theatre until his decease. Such a silence expresses how great their humiliation was in his death.

It was in his return from the theatre, and in the midst of the toils, he was resuming, in order to acquire fresh applause, that Voltaire was warned that the long career of his impiety was drawing to an end.

In spite of all the sophisters flocking around him in the first days of his illness, he gave signs of wishing to return to the God whom he had so long blasphemed. He called for the priests who ministered to *him* whom he had

sworn to *crush*, under the appellation of the *wretch*.\*

His danger increasing, he wrote the following note to the Abbe Gaultier :

" You had promised me, Sir, to come and hear me, I entreat that you would take the trouble of calling as soon as possible,

(Signed,) VOLTAIRE."

Paris, 26th Feb. 1777.

A few days after he wrote the following declaration, in presence of the same Abbe Gaultier, the Abbe Mignot, and the Marquis de Villevieille, copied from the minutes deposited with M. Moinet, Notary, at Paris.

"I, the under written, declare that for these 4 days past, having been afflicted with a vomiting of blood, at the age of eighty-four, and not having been able to drag myself to the church, the Reverend, the Rector of Saint Sulpice, having been pleased to add to his good works that of sending to me the Abbe Gaultier, a priest, I confessed to him; and if it pleases God to dispose of me, I die in the Holy Catholic Church, in which I was born; hoping that the divine mercy will deign to pardon all my faults. If ever I have scandalized the Church, I ask pardon of God and of the Church.

(Signed,) VOLTAIRE.

March 2, 1778.

In presence of the Abbe Mignot, my nephew; and the Marquis de Villevieille, my friend."

After the two witnesses had

signed this declaration, Voltaire added these words, copied from the same minutes.

"The Abbe Gualtier, my confessor, having apprized me that it was said among a certain set of people, 'I should protest against every thing that I did at my death,' I declare that I never made such a speech, and that it is an old jest, attributed long since to many of the learned, more enlightened than I am."

Was this declaration a fresh instance of his former hypocrisy? for he had the mean hypocrisy, even in the midst of his efforts against christianity, to receive the Sacrament regularly, and to do other acts of religion, merely to be able to deny his infidelity, if accused of it. After the explanations we have unfortunately seen him give of his exterior acts of religion, might there not be room for doubt. Be that as it may, there is a public homage paid to that religion in which he declared he meant to die, notwithstanding his having perpetually conspired against it during his life. This declaration is also signed by the same friend and adept the Marquis de Villevieille, to whom eleven years ago, Voltaire was wont to write, "Conceal your march from your enemy in your endeavours to crush the wretch!"

Voltaire had permitted this declaration to be carried to the Rector of St. Sulpice, and to the Archbishop of Paris, to know whether it would be sufficient. When the

Abbe Gaultier returned with the answer, it was impossible for him to gain admittance to the patient. The conspirators had strained every nerve to hinder the chief from consummating his reconciliation, and every avenue was shut to the priest, whom Voltaire himself had sent for. The demons haunted every access; rage succeeded to fury, and fury to rage again during the remainder of his life.

Then it was that D. Alembert, Diderot, and about twenty others of the conspirators, who had beset his apartment, never approached him but to witness their own infamy. He would often curse them, and exclaim, "Retire! it is you that have brought me to my present state. Begone! I could have done without you all; but you could not exist without me. And what a wretched glory have ye produced for me?"

Then would succeed the horrid remembrance of his conspiracy. They could hear him, the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating or blaspheming that God whom he had conspired against, and in plaintive accents he would cry out, "Oh Christ! Oh Jesus Christ;" and then complain that he was abandoned by God and man. The hand which had traced in ancient writ the sentence of an impious and reviling king, seemed to trace before his eyes, *crush then, do crush the wretch*. In vain he turned his head away; the time was coming a pace, when he was to appear before the tribunal of

him whom he had blasphemed; and his physicians, especially M. Tronchin, calling in to administer relief, thunderstruck, retired, *declaring the death of the impious man to be terrible indeed.* The pride of the conspirators would willingly have suppressed these declarations, but it was in vain. The Marshal of Richelieu flies from the bed side declaring it to be too terrible to be sustained; and M. Tronchin, that *the furies of Orestes could give but a faint idea of those of Voltaire.*

ABBE BARUEL.

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\*It is well known that Voltaire had been accustomed for many years to call our blessed Saviour *The Wretch, l'Infame* whom he vowed to crush. The conclusion of many of his letters is in these words—*Ecraser l'Infame—Crush the wretch.*

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LETTER FROM THOMAS HOPOO TO REV.  
HERMAN DAGGETT.

From the New Haven Religious Intelligencer.

Kiruah, (Owhyhee,) Dec. 22, 1823.

To my much loved and reverend Father, who taught me to know Jesus Christ, the God of heaven. Great is my affection towards you, my best friend in America; but greater is my love to Jesus, who is in heaven. I remember and regard what you said to me, when I was at your house; 'Thomas, be patient, be faithful, be much in prayer to God, that your benighted countrymen may be saved by Jehovah.'

Jehovah has heard our prayers to him, that this land of darkness might be enlightened by him, and that this people might know the salvation of Jesus Christ. I am here patiently, and I hope faithfully, laboring among them, and teaching them the Gospel of salvation, that their souls may be quickened by Jesus from the dust of sin and death.

It rejoices my heart very much, to speak often to them about the salvation of Jesus Christ, that they also may behold the glory of Jehovah, the everlasting God. Is there any other business of life so good and so great as this? No: there is no other service like that of Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we must be saved: through him we shall arrive at heaven: there we shall see his glory, in the kingdom of his Father.

I am here, on Owhyhee, diligently publishing the word of God to the people, that they may understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of men. I was at Woahoo some time, teaching the palapala (reading and writing) to the people of one of the chiefs. After this, I was sent to Owhyhee by the missionaries, to teach Kuakini, (or Governor Adams, as he is sometimes called,) the principal chief on the island, and to teach his people, the men, and the women, and the children of Kiruah.

I had been on Owhyhee a little more than a year, when Mr. Thurston arrived at Kiruah, with his



family. The governor of Owhyhee has built a meeting-house at Kiruah, and on the tenth of this month, it was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Jehovah. On this interesting occasion, the Rev. Mr. Thurston preached from this text—Haggai 1: 7, 8. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord."

All the chiefs of these islands are pleased with Mr. Thurston, because he preaches to them the good word of God. He is very faithful and diligent in telling the people about the great God of heaven. He is a very good preacher in the language of Owhyhee, and points out to us the straight and narrow way, that our souls may arrive at heaven, through Jesus Christ. He is the only minister on Owhyhee, at the present time. The governor likes Mr. Thurston, because he understands the native language; and he also speaks it almost as well as one of the people.

In a few days, I expect to commence a school in the native language. Some already know how to read and write. The number of my scholars, at Kiruah, the last year, was 120. By and by, I shall have 40 more scholars at Kiruah, which will make 160. There is one of my scholars, who, I think, is born again. His name is Kelou, or Kamakau.—He is a chief, and

lives at Kaawaroa Bay, at the place where Captain Cooke was killed. I have instructed him in the word of God. By and by, perhaps, he will be a minister. He is a good chief. He prays continually to God for you all, who live in the Christian land, that you may all be saved through Jesus Christ.

I will tell you something about the governor of Owhyhee. His desires after God are not very great. By and by, perhaps, he will turn his thoughts to Jesus. I pray with him and his family every night and morning. He wrote to Mr. Thurston, to send Thomas to pray with him, that he might be saved through Jesus Christ. I think also that Kapiolani, a chief woman of Owhyhee, loves God, and loves Jesus Christ. She is continually hoping to go to heaven through Jesus Christ.

My old father too, loves the Lord Jesus Christ. He thinks much about the great God. He rejoices at the thoughts of going to heaven when he dies. Jesus Christ is the continual object of his desires. He thinks about him by night and by day. He is almost the only object of his heart's desire, in these his last days. He wants very much to go to Jesus in heaven, that he may quickly see the glory of Jehovah. I am satisfied that he finds evidence of piety in his own heart; and I rejoice also that he has found Jesus. I call on my friends to rejoice with me.

By and by, the eyes, and limbs, and bones, of the missionaries will be worn out, in labouring for the good of this people. By and by, perhaps, the people of these islands will go before some of the people in America, who have the Gospel and believe it not. Perhaps they will get to heaven, and leave some of you behind. What will become of you, if you do not love Jesus, when the great day of judgment shall come, when Jesus shall come in the clouds of heaven, with his angels! What will you do then? What will you say? Lord Jesus, have mercy on the unbelievers in America.

Mr. and Mrs. Thurston send their kind regards to Mr. and Mrs. Daggett, wishing to be prayerfully remembered, with their little ones.

I am yours, the same as ever,

THOMAS HOPOO.

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AN AGED SINNER'S ADVICE.

*"Quench not the Spirit."*

"My children," said the old man, "few are the words of your dying father. I wish them to sink deep into your hearts." Then raising himself a little in his bed with a degree of strength which he had not been able to command for several of the last weeks of his sickness, he proceeded.

"When young I enjoyed religious privileges and was the subject of occasional serious reflection.—When just entering my 16th year, religious impressions were made

on my mind with unusual force.—I seemed to hear a voice continually saying to me *seek religion now*. I was unhappy; my former amusements lost their relish. Still I was not willing wholly to relinquish them, and obey the voice which urged me to seek religion immediately. One day, after much reflection, I deliberately promised to God that as soon as the season of youthful amusement was past, I would give myself to religious pursuits. My anxieties immediately left me; I returned to my amusements and the whole subject was soon forgotten.

"When at twenty-five, the monitory voice returned, reminded me of my promise, and again pressed upon me the importance of eternal things. Though I had not thought of my promise for years I acknowledged its obligation, but an immediate fulfilment seemed more impracticable than it did nine years before.

"I vowed with increased solemnity, that when the cares of a rising family should subside I would certainly attend to the concerns of religion.

"Again I applied myself to worldly avocations, and soon buried all thoughts of the admonition I had received. At fifty, when you, my children, were diminishing, instead of increasing my cares this heavenly monitor returned.—"Fulfil your promise, seek religion now" was continually pressing upon my mind. I knew that I had made such a promise, but I felt dissatisfied that its fulfilment should

be claimed so soon. I regretted that I had not attended to the subject before, when I could have done it with less difficulty; but such was the extent and pressure of my business that to do it then seemed impossible. The subject made me unhappy, and after much deliberation I sought relief to my troubled feelings, by the most solemnly renewing my promise to God.—When, I said, the pressure of business is past, I will devote my whole attention to a preparation for eternity.

“No sooner had I fixed my mind on this course, than my anxieties left me, the strivings of the Spirit ceased in my bosom, and ceased for ever. When sickness warned me of approaching death I sought to fix my feelings on this subject, but it was in vain. There was a gloom and terror drawn around religion at which my soul shuddered. I felt that I was forsaken of God, but it did not move me. I had no love to God, no repentance for sin, nor wish to forsake it. I felt nothing but the sudden gloom of despair—I knew I was in the hands of a justly offended God from whom I expected no mercy and could ask none. With these feelings I am now about to enter the eternal world. To you my children I can only say, profit by my example—quench not the Spirit—seek religion now, if you would avoid a miserable eternity; put not off the concerns of your souls till”—The sentence died upon his lips; his strength, which

had been all summoned to make this last effort, suddenly failed, he fell back upon his bed, and with a groan that seemed to speak the pains of another world, the immortal spirit took its flight from that body which it had inhabited nearly fourscore years, to receive according to that it had done.

This little narrative I had from a grandson of the old man, who stood by his dying bed. He was a minister of the Gospel, and dated his first permanent conviction from the solemnities of that awful scene. The descendants of the old man were numerous, most of whom became hopefully pious. Two, who are now preachers, and several others were first awakened by his dying charge.

A few particulars in the last years of this aged sinner are perhaps worthy of remark.

Three years before his death there was a revival in the place where he resided, and the son with whom he lived was a subject of its influence. He made the most violent opposition to his sons religious feelings, and never whilst able to move about the house did he remain in the room during family prayer nor till his dying hour was a prayer offered in his hearing at his request.

He so studiously avoided all religious conversation, that from the death of his wife, which was thirteen years previous, he was never known to say a word about his own feelings, till in his dying moments he made the communication above given.—*Boston Monitor.*



**OBITUARY.**

Died in Milford, Mass, June 30, 1824, Mrs. REBECCA LONG, consort of Rev. David Long, and eldest daughter of Mr. Tyler Curtis, late of Worcester, aged 46. She has left an affectionate husband and three children to mourn their loss, who were not insensible of her worth.

In this event, many are deeply afflicted. To her family, her superior domestic qualities, and her pious counsels and instructions, were an inestimable treasure. Her affability, prudence, and sound judgment secured the esteem and confidence of relatives and friends, the people with whom she was connected, and a large circle of acquaintances abroad.

In her religious character, she was uniform and exemplary. And to those especially, who were most intimately acquainted with her practical piety, her deep humility and self-abasement appeared conspicuous. Her last illness, which was of more than two years continuance, and which was often attended with peculiar distress, was borne with distinguished patience and resignation. An apprehension early possessed her mind, that her complicated maladies would terminate only with her life. But this apprehension was seldom attended with that depression of spirits, which is often found to be a consequence. Her faith in the Saviour enabled her to contemplate the approaching scenes of death and eternity with composure, and often calmly to administer counsel and consolation to her afflicted family. At some times, she felt in a measure the want of spiritual comforts. But at all times, she manifested an unshaken resolution to yield her temporal and eternal interests to the divine disposal.

As her dissolution drew near, her sufferings greatly increased; and she found additional need of prayer for an increase of patience and submission to the will of God. But not a murmuring word, through the whole of her long illness, was ever known to escape from her tongue. For a few days before her death, her sufferings became extreme. She was sensible she was entering the "valley of the shadow of death," and engaging in the final conflict with the "last enemy." In the intervals of her

paroxysms, she made many observations to those about her, exhorting them to prepare for such a time as she was then passing. It is scarcely possible for any but an eye witness to conceive with what solemnity and energy such observations were made. As long as she was able to speak, her reason remained entire, even when the agonies of death had seized her whole frame. At length the moment arrived when all her toils were to end. The extremity of her sufferings appeared to subside, several hours before her death. After passing an hour in the greatest conceivable distress, she fell into a state of apparent insensibility, from which she did not afterwards awake: and at last resigned her breath without a struggle, and doubtless departed in peace to mansions of eternal rest. *The righteous hath hope in his death.*

The funeral solemnities were attended, July 2, by a numerous auditory, who testified their respect and affection for the deceased, by their solemnity and tenderness. An appropriate discourse was delivered on the occasion by Rev. Nathaniel Emmons, D. D. on Job. i. 21: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

[Communicated.]

The Obituary notices sent us, which do not appear in this Number, are not deemed of sufficient general interest to justify their insertion.

**TO SUBSCRIBERS.**

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